TYPHOON ZITA (17W)

Typhoon Zita (TY) (17W) was the second of four tropical cyclones, TY Victor (13W), TY Zita (17W), TY Fritz (22W), and TY Linda (30W) to develop and reach typhoon intensity in the South China Sea during 1997. Although short-lived, the system reached a peak intensity of 75 kt (39 m/sec) as it entered the Gulf of Tonkin and maintained that intensity until landfall was made over Vietnam.

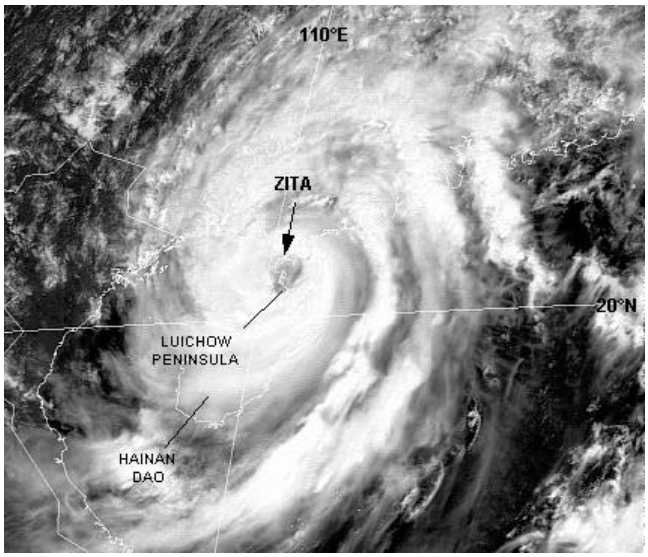
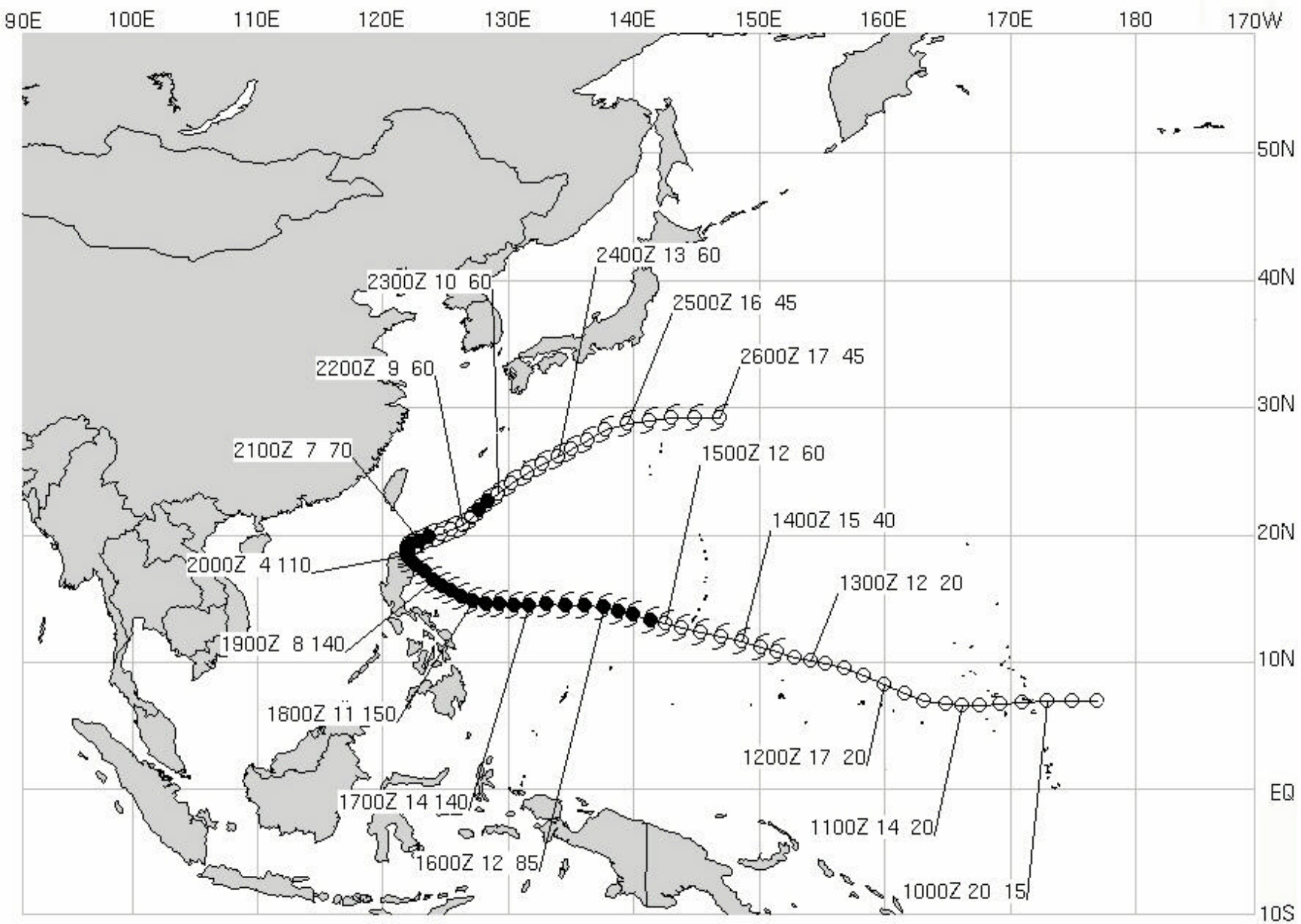


Figure 3-17-1 Zita develops a ragged eye over the Luichow Peninsula, just north of Hainan Dao At peak intensity, (220427Z August visible GMS imagery).

On 19 August, a tropical disturbance formed in the South China Sea approximately 300 nm (560 km) to the west of the Philippine island of Luzon. This disturbance was first mentioned on the 20 August Significant Tropical Weather Advisory (ABPW) after an area of deep convection had persisted for 12 hours in association with a weak low-level cyclonic circulation. As the system moved into an area of easterly environmental steering flow, convective organization improved and became more centrally located. This prompted JTWC to issue a Tropical Cyclone Formation Alert (TCFA), valid at 2030Z on 20 August. Shortly thereafter, banding features developed and JTWC issued its first warning on Tropical Storm Zita (17W) valid at 0000Z on the 21st. Zita continued tracking towards the west under the influence of easterly steering flow, equatorward of the subtropical ridge. Outflow aloft was good in all quadrants with little to no vertical wind sheer. Despite the proximity to China's southern coastline, the system reached typhoon intensity at 0000Z on the 22nd, approximately 180 nm (330 km) southwest of Hong Kong. Zita reached its peak intensity of 75 kt (39 m/sec) at 0600Z the same day over the Luichow Peninsula, just north of Hainan Dao (Figure 3-17-1). Zita maintained this intensity for 18 hours as it tracked westward through the Gulf of Tonkin. The cyclone made landfall over Vietnam on 2100Z on the 22nd and dissipated as it moved into the mountainous terrain. The final JTWC warning was issued at 0600Z on the 23rd. No reports of damage or injuries were received.


90E
100E
110E
120E
130E
140E
150E
160E
170E
180
170W
50N
40N
30N
20N
10N
EQ
10S
2400Z 13 60
2300Z 10 60
2500Z 16 45
2600Z 17 45
2200Z 9 60
2100Z 7 70
1500Z 12 60
1400Z 15 40
2000Z 4 110
1300Z 12 20
1900Z 8 140
1800Z 11 150
1200Z 17 20
1700Z 14 140
1100Z 14 20
1600Z 12 85
1000Z 20 15